



PS  
3523  
0937  
L9





Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.



Cornell University Library  
PS 3523.O937L9

Love's testament, a sonnet sequence, by G.



3 1924 021 766 419

olin



LOVE'S TESTAMENT  
A SONNET SEQUENCE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
AN ISEULT IDYLL  
& OTHER POEMS  
Crown 8vo



LOVE'S TESTAMENT  
A SONNET SEQUENCE  
BY G. CONSTANT LOUNSBERY

LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD  
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMVI

v.

MW

16/1/11

A.250307

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
At the Ballantyne Press

## DEDICATION

To —

*Let me not with the graving of thy name  
Betray thee to men's curiosity,  
As if my verse could grace or honour thee,  
And so confer an all illusive fame:  
Not humble is my just and simple claim,  
If in my chronicle a man shall see  
Thy conjured loveliness, and pause to be  
A worshipper of love's immortal flame.*

*Some pensive lover, lightly reading here  
Shall start, to see the sudden gleaming feet  
Of wingèd love, so sweet, so over fleet;  
And tremble that a god has passed so near.  
But he who seeks thy name must come apart  
And search the hidden tablets in my heart.*



I

As some old minstrel when the world was young,  
Unlearned in science, innocent of skill,  
Would sing his love beside a mountain rill  
In his uncouth and all unlettered tongue,  
And shake the woodlands till the echoes rung  
From dewy morn to dewy eve, and thrill  
The listening moon-enchanted hours until  
The astonished nightingale all silent hung ;

So would I hymn thee, oh, my sole delight,  
While the glad hours after thy beauty trip,  
And day to day doth whisper thee along.  
With such a theme all unabashed I might  
Pipe to the morning with untutored lip,  
Or lull the evening with unlettered song.

OF LOVE, I-VI



## II

To make my verse the crystal of thy face,  
My words the jewels blazoning thy name,  
To lift thy loveliness to lasting fame,  
To tell thy beauty and to sing thy grace ;  
Remembering thee all thoughts else to efface,  
To light love at thy lips and be its flame,  
To burn before thee ever and the same,  
To make my heart thy sure abiding place !

To murmur thee like music in a dream,  
To make reality one dream of thee,  
To haunt thee with my happiness, to be  
Beneath thy barque like an enchanted stream,  
Oh poet's dream, all other dreams above,  
Oh happiness, oh grievous joy of love !





### III

WHEN in the world of men and sad affairs  
I watch the close contention of the day,  
The toil, the turmoil, and the strange array  
Of petty struggles and of sordid cares,  
Ah then my spirit fails, my heart despairs,  
Seeing my little fitness to essay  
The battle, though mine eyes covet the bay  
That crowns the man who ventures and who dares.

For neither wealth nor loud-clapped fame have I  
To offer thee, oh gracious heart of gold,  
Yet in thy love all priceless wealth I hold,  
And in thy name I find the spell whereby  
I conjure happiness, whose dwelling is  
The refuge and the rapture of thy kiss.



#### IV

AT the dull ending of some desperate day,  
After the stretches of our separate hours,  
My heart sinks down, and all my courage cowers  
Before the giant Life barring my way,  
Calling for toll, demanding that I pay  
My youth, my truth, my undetermined powers,  
E'er I gain fame or riches, or those towers  
Of tall success that hold the world at bay.

To hypocryze, to cheat, to fawn, to lie,  
To wear men's masks and custom's livery,  
As does the world I hate, e'en so do I,  
Hating myself until I think of thee,—  
Then as a sudden moon dissolves the night,  
Thy truth redeems my darkness with its light.



V

I WOULD not bind thee with this love of mine,  
Nor hold thee by that gracious love of me  
Which is my glory, nay love, be thou free,  
Unfettered by this fret of mine and thine.  
Let not possession my love's course define,  
O thou my pride and my humility,  
Through whom, for whom I love humanity  
Since thou hast made all human love divine.

Thy pleasure be my heart's unique concern,  
Homage and service be my offering,  
Demanding naught, naught asking in return,  
Save only the sweet right thy praise to sing  
And my unfailing gratitude to prove,  
Oh love of mine, that thou hast taught me love.



## VI

YET I would bind thee with this love of mine,  
    Hold thee and fold thee, crush thee unto me,  
    Hide thee from all men's gaze, let no man see  
What loveliness has made me so much thine ;  
Making the circle of mine arms define  
    The limits of thy freedom, selfishly  
    Compass thy days, thy nights with jealousy,  
Know all thy thoughts, thy very prayers devine.

Beyond the deepest kiss, eludes us still  
    Some deeper pang of sweetness, and in vain  
    The iron barriers of flesh remain  
To separate our unity—I will  
Slay thy sweet body that I may control  
Thee utterly, and kiss thee soul to soul.





## VII

I HAVE not seen thee, love, this weary day,  
And all the heavy hours of it are dead  
With longing for that dear desired head,  
Whose absence steals my vagrant joys away.  
How shall I conjure thee, or what word say  
Of all the sweet words love hath left unsaid,  
For at his touch all thoughts, all words are fled,  
Like winter's snows that take the breath of May ?

The May ? Alas, December's wind blows clear,  
I cannot hear the murmur of the spring,  
Nor watch the snowdrops first adventuring  
Across the dark skirts of the purple year.  
Ah, wilt thou come to me, dear love ! I wait  
Dumb as the winter, inarticulate.

OF ABSENCE, VII-XII



## VIII

WHEN thou art gone from me, as in a trance,  
With futile steps I wander up and down,  
A solitary in the swarming town,  
Questioning sadly every countenance ;  
This hath thy smile, thy hair, and this perchance  
Thy voice, less sweet than thine so sweetly known,  
Then thinking on thy traits which are love's own,  
Through blinding tears bewildered I advance.

And if I seek within some jewelled page  
Forgetfulness, ah, then most suddenly  
I turn to show its buried charm to thee—  
In vain my anguish, and in vain my rage ;  
But when my pen would write as is its use,  
My very thoughts are absent with my muse.



## IX

UNDER black clouds that lour against the spring,  
Among the warring multitude of men,  
Comes one sweet thought again to me, again  
The thought of thee, all thoughts else banishing.  
This is that light that knows no vanishing,  
That fountain of the soul that freshens when  
The raging world seems like a lion's den,  
Wherein we cast each dear and lovely thing.

Then memory, with hope linked hand in hand,  
Does homage to thy beauty, and I see  
Thy loveliness that burns through space to me  
Across the ineffectual sea and land,  
And Love, alone of gods by time untrod,  
Raises me up a veritable god.



## X

IN the wild tempests of the shaken mind,  
Through the deep waters of disastrous days,  
By strange steep paths of pain, and lonely ways  
Made desert, and made difficult to find,  
I struggle up to thee, mine eyes are blind  
With tears more eloquent than all man says,  
I grope about me, and the dark betrays  
My footsteps to the mocking of the wind.

But yesterday the flower-stained fields were glad,  
Glad with the spoken wonder of the spring,  
And all my heart their joy re-echoing  
Knew not its sorrow, wherewith it is sad.  
To-day is dark with desolating rain,  
Until thy smile shall light the spring again.





## XI

Go from me, let the unpropitious hours  
That hold no echo of thee mock my pain,  
Thou canst not leave me utterly again :  
In vain the distance rolls its towns and towers,  
The loud sea widens, and the mountain glowers,  
And all man's hatred threatens us in vain ;  
We are apart, not separate nor twain,  
While love unites this single heart of ours.

I dread not life, nor the less fearful death  
Most futile foes to wound or separate,  
Yet do I fear lest some malicious fate  
Out of my mouth, or by thy cruel hand,  
Shall slay love, as it were with our command,  
And close for us this paradise on earth.



## XII

IF no night gave thee to mine arms again,  
If no day lent its taper to thy face,  
If the oblivion of thy deep embrace  
Were but a memory invoked in vain ;  
If in the murmured melancholy rain,  
And in the spring I found of thee no trace,  
Banished thy love's sweet secret dwelling-place,  
Thy joys, thy sorrows, thy delight, thy pain :

If in the twilight of the wilted day,  
When each sheep nears its fold, each bird its nest,  
My weary head in vain should seek thy breast,  
Thine answering hand, thy voice to soothe my way,  
Life could not prison me, for each man hath  
The right to pluck the ready grape of death.



### XIII

OUT of the treacherous and smiling sky,  
The unsuspected fury of the storm,  
The live oaks bend and groan, and tempest torn,  
Their deep roots quiver and their branches sigh.  
The wingèd leaves set free go whirling by,  
As a man's scattered thoughts are blown and born,  
By that strange force of passion that we scorn,  
And in our tranquil moments would defy.

No tender god is love, but terrible,  
Asking a victim and a sacrifice,  
And staying not for virtue nor for vice,  
To whom nothing is good, and nothing ill—  
Tempting with the forbidden fruit of earth  
Wherein we eat of wisdom, life and death.

OF PASSION, XIII-XVIII



## XIV

THY head is full of scent and colour, sweet,  
Thy prisoned pulses beat against thy throat,  
One sob that is love's full triumphant note,  
E'en as the wind convulses the ripe wheat,  
Shakes thy sweet body to thy tender feet ;  
Some passion sweeps thee onward like a boat  
Bewildered, rudderless, and set afloat,  
And flings thee senseless as the storms retreat.

And in mine ears the sound of thy delight,  
And on my lips, oh love, thy murmured name,  
Thrilling and filling all the haunted night,  
Blinding mine eyes as with a sudden flame,  
We playthings of deep destiny—alone  
With nature's heart, our hearts in unison.





## XV

ALL ye who come into this sacred place,  
Where every kiss becomes an answered prayer,  
Where in the shining downfall of her hair  
Is hid the face of love against her face ;  
Where soft surrender shyly will replace  
That conquering, that sweet imperious air,  
Pause ye and tremble, and be doubly ware  
To worship love apart a little space.

For this is Eden, this is paradise,  
Love's wand of magic, love's enchanted wand,  
Upon the lips, upon the widened eyes,  
Has made ye see, has made ye understand.  
Watch and beware lest any snake intrude  
Upon your happy dual solitude.



## XVI

SLAY me, sweet love, for it is better so,  
    Whatever life may hold of fair or sweet,  
    This moment comes not twice, e'er it retreat  
While yet we triumph, let us turn and go,  
Linger not here to watch the afterglow,  
    Here all Life's forces war and blend and meet,  
    One golden moment utterly complete,  
Which is our conquest and our overthrow.

Love, was it joy, or rather was it fear,  
    That shook the tortured pulses of thy throat,  
    And made me tremble like a quivering note,  
For on thy face there glows a radiant tear ?  
Behold how calm again the troubled deep,  
And at our feet the smiling sea of sleep.



## XVII

YOU ask me if it always shall be so,  
If I shall tremble when I take your hand,  
And in your eyes behold the promised land,  
And linger and return when I should go ;  
If some sweet word of love like fire will blow  
Its flame upon the pulse to madness fanned,  
And if the heart will hear and understand  
These nothings that are all we lovers know.

The flesh is faithful, but the restless soul,  
Seeking its fellow, will pursue its way,  
Unless across these travesties of clay  
Our separate selves have blended in a whole,  
Till I and thou are one, at last, and we  
Lay human hands on immortality.



## XVIII

To feel the pulsing of the distant sea,  
The ebbing sap that swells within the flower,  
And in thy heart-beat some mysterious power,  
Which is not thine, and yet is part of thee,  
To hear and know the deeper harmony,  
Resolving all the discords of the hour—  
Content, completed, like a steadfast tower—  
Why, this is love, and love's brief history.

To know the shelter, the secure retreat  
Of peaceful sympathy, that puts to flight  
Black sorrow's brood like evil birds of night,  
And makes thy wayward happiness complete ;  
To find when melancholy stealeth on  
That touch whose rapture brings oblivion.





## XIX

THE sweet confusion of thy careless touch,  
Thy light, thy languid kiss, thine indolence,  
Thy seldom laugh, thy long indifference,  
These nothings toward me are, alas ! of such  
An evil augury, fraught with so much,  
That I am effortless, all eloquence  
But aggravates my anguished impotence  
Before the feebling love at which we clutch.

Oh love, immortal love, so mutable ;  
Protean love, this worst thing shall not be,  
But as the May with flowers decks each tree  
Before the leaves put forth, so changeable  
Is love ; behold where his bright buds have been  
The deep leaved rest of the enduring green.

OF DOUBT, XIX-XXIV



## XX

OH love, behold me how I am thy slave,  
Born free and fearless, now an abject thrall  
Sent here, sent there, and at thy beck and call,  
Bound as a corpse within its narrow grave !  
Thy kisses fetter, thy commands enslave,  
How fair thy yoke, yet what yoke will not gall ?  
And then, so thinking, suddenly I fall  
To praising thee—what freedom do I crave ?

Oh, let me go from thee, or bind me fast ;  
I fear thee, love, lest some day thou shalt say,  
“Take back thy freedom, go thine ancient way !”  
Then my unfettered limbs, set free at last,  
Grown helpless to pursue their happiness,  
Shall fail me in the land of loneliness.



## XXI

To myself false, and to my love of thee  
    Revealed a traitor, since my daring eyes,  
    Ignoring their allegiance, criticise  
Where they have worshipped in their loyalty,  
I stand myself accusing loyally,  
    Seeking no cunning refuge to devise,  
    Self-judged, self-sentenced, while no men despise  
The crime as I do, weeping bitterly.

Oh, pity him who, loyal to his king,  
    Or to his god most faithful, wakes one day  
    To find his strong allegiance swept away,  
Traitor or infidel, whose suffering  
Outweighs the pangs of earthly punishment,  
And dooms him to enduring banishment.



## XXII

YET love me, love, for my great need of thee  
Whose loveliness is all mine argument ;  
Since thou hast poured the oil of sweet content  
Upon the tossed and troubled heart of me !  
For thy sake, for mine own, how bitterly  
My little worth I often do lament,  
My excellent, my impotent intent,  
Futile, and doomed to sad sterility.

In fabled days of fond mythology,  
When an immortal loved a mortal man  
Straightway she gave him immortality.  
This much thy love stooping to raise me can,  
So strengthened, I should dare all heights, and rise  
As simply as the suns ascend the skies.





## XXIII

THOU shalt not fail me, thou who art my all,  
Whose large compassion clothes my worth-  
lessness,  
Whose hand hath lifted up my helplessness,  
And in whose trusted strength I stand or fall.  
Nor am I other than I was at all,  
When first the glory of thy loveliness  
Revealed my deep, my prisoning distress,  
And I came forth bewildered at thy call.

Not love alone, and love's sweet fellowship,  
Nor the responsive and reiterate beat—  
Pulse answering pulse, astonished as they meet—  
But the familiar joy of comradeship,  
All childhood's faith, all manhood's sympathy,  
And every trivial need leads back to thee.



## XXIV

WITHIN the centre of the whirlpool, peace,  
Peace unperplexed is ours this little day,  
All cares are fled, all troubles stolen away,  
And in my hand lies thine in pulseless ease ;  
The giddy waves of life, the tortured seas  
Break at our feet, defeated of their prey,  
And trail their hissing, cheated coils away,  
Since here all strife grows strengthless and must  
cease.

Spring in our hearts, and in the gladdening green  
The glow of our reflected happiness,  
Clothing the world with light by all unseen  
Save those who love to worship, and to bless  
Beauty, who lives and moves and speaks through  
thee,  
Beauty, which is eternal harmony.



## XXV

WHEN I survey each living monument  
That speaks the annals of a buried age,  
And in a pyramid or yellowed page  
Behold a nation chronicled and spent,  
Or when I see some marble still unbent  
With its young beauty mocking at time's rage,  
I envy the old sculptor or the sage  
Who laboured in those days of sweet content.

All these who were love's chartered ministers  
From him derived their being and their power,  
And made immortal their deciduous hour,  
While unto him their fame administers ;  
For love, which was their source, became their  
crown,  
Mingling with his their envious renown

OF PHILOSOPHY, XXV-XXX



## XXVI

LET others prate of progress, those who will  
With boasts of proud to-day rebuke our sires,  
The seasons weary, Nature never tires,  
And man is little moved for good or ill ;  
Blindly he circles, blind fate to fulfil,  
An animal lashed with a god's desires,  
Fettered with flesh, while his high soul aspires  
Beyond his force, his courage and his will.

What have *we* done ? To-day as yesterday,  
And as to-morrow, has its prostitute,  
Its thief, its poet, its poor destitute  
Thrust upon life, for life condemned to pay.  
Greater than Christ is he who shall unbind  
The curse of money crippling sad mankind.





## XXVII

FOR this men die, nay more, they live for this,  
And hate and envy and grow hard of heart,  
And sell their lives, their loves, debauch their art,  
And grow more cruel than the wild beast is.  
Like his their greed, their hunger, and like his  
Their bloody thirst when in the venial mart,  
As in the chase, they take a bestial part,  
And sell their souls, as women sell a kiss.

Oh noble man, ignoble animal,  
Arise, awake, and slay thy lust of gold ;  
Let each man have his body's length of sod,  
That we may live, and love, and hear the call  
Of beauty, e'en as Plato did of old,  
Loving the good, the beautiful, the God.



## XXVIII

THE foul-mouthed world with its corrupting breath  
    Vomits upon us all its calumnies,  
    And credits us with its impurities,  
Sowing dissension and the seeds of death.  
This man from malice, that from envy saith  
    Some ill, their leering curiosities,  
    Their cruel carelessness, amaze and please,  
And evil, all things ill imagineth.

The natural becomes the shameful nude,  
    And veiled indecencies, the natural.  
Oh love, let no man guess, no eye intrude  
    On our identities, that none may call  
The multitude to mock and mire our name,  
And soil it with the impertinence of fame.



## XXIX

WHAT need have we of old or new-born creeds !  
Obscuring the perplexèd face of truth,  
Bridling the beauty of unharnessed youth,  
Yoking the spirit to ignoble deeds !  
Free were we born : the slave, the savage needs  
The lash, the law, the sordid hand of ruth,  
Tools of a bygone age, unlearned, uncouth,  
While growing manhood unto godhood leads.

All suffering is but stupidity ;  
Then banish sorrow and the name of sin,  
And let the light of strong joy enter in  
To purify your hearts and set them free,  
That ye may share a kingless, priestless sod,  
And lift man to the vacant throne of God.



### XXX

WHEN I behold how everything that is  
    Within the unstable world and shifting sea  
    Makes common cause with Nature's cruelty,  
And preys upon his kind but cannot miss  
His own destruction, seeing e'en as his  
    Man's dubious fate and mutability,  
    And how the immortal gods' divinity  
By time is brought to such a state as this—

Then I much marvel at Love's permanence,  
    Who is so lovely, and who seems so frail,  
    And yet Time's conquering self doth cower and  
    quail  
Before his sweet command and eloquence ;  
From bestial nature he doth recreate  
Mortals, immortal lords of life and fate.





## XXXI

THE gracious ghosts of those old sonneteers,  
Whose memory glows with an immortal flame,  
Wearing the mantle of a deathless fame,  
That fades not with the falling of the years :  
Shakespeare and Dante, Petrarch, equal seers,  
Each with his threatening and majestic name,  
To me, a humble poet, proudly came,  
As I sat dreaming in the vale of tears.

And pity and rebuke I seemed to read  
On every face at my audacity,  
Till suddenly, in my bewildered need,  
I bid them look, oh love of mine, on thee !  
Then all astonished at the joyous sight  
They vanished, and an unseen voice cried, "Write."

OF CONTENT, XXXI-XXXVI



## XXXII

How shall I praise thee, seeing thou art more  
    Than all my singing, or all song to me ;  
    Thou who hast bid me tune my lyre for thee,  
Though little skilled in verse or poet's lore ?  
Yet would I teach the ages to adore,  
    Where I have worshipped in humility,  
    Baring thy beauty, crying only see—  
Here is your Helen, bow ye down before.

What god, what altar, what unhonoured shrine  
    Shall rise for us to take our offering ;  
    The perfect joy of happiness we bring,  
The incense of our song, our hearts' bright wine,  
Our passion's glad and purifying flame,  
That lifts its torch to light love's holy name ?



### XXXIII

LEND me thy beauty in the sullen night  
To light the tedious desert of my days,  
To lead me through the dull ungladdened ways,  
Onwards and upwards toward the healing light.  
Lend me thy beauty when the sun's sweet might  
Beating upon my wilted strength betrays  
My weariness ; thy beauty, love, always  
To shelter me and cloak me for the fight.

E'en as a god with steadfast joyous eyes,  
Who wears the glow of immortality,  
Conjures the beauty that he seeks to see,  
So I, oh love, whom thy love purifies,  
Shall summon loveliness and breathe its breath,  
Till it smiles down on me the sleep of death.



## XXXIV

PETAL by petal, the sweet hours are shed,  
The seasons pass, the old leaves fall away,  
Stained with the scarlet of the wounded day  
The ancient year bows down his whitened head.  
Oh love, with stealthy feet and hurried tread  
Time urges all things on and waits his prey,  
Nor shall our tears prevent, our prayers gainsay,  
The hour that adds us to its buried dead.

Oh mortal loveliness, immortal change,  
While memory whispers us this prophecy,  
That the sweet lingering past shall ever be  
A sweeter future, while our hearts exchange  
The new-born pleasure of familiar love,  
Whose wings are folded, like a nesting dove.





## XXXV

I COUNT it half a joy that I have known  
The folly and the shamelessness of men,  
The hollowness of vaunted friendship, when  
Our crying need is indiscreetly shown  
That every hope and each ideal is flown,  
That love made soft my wary heart, and then  
Rent it and tossed it into hatred's den,  
That life has proved the lie all men condone.

Since naked, wounded, sick and sore afraid,  
Spoiled by the thieves of fierce reality,  
Lacking all things, all things I owe to thee,  
My poverty thus richly is repaid,  
And I replace each vague illusion lost  
With love's reality, beyond all cost.



### XXXVI

As a fair golden day set in the waste  
Of weary winter wakens with its breath  
The ghosts of summer from the sleep of death  
And gives of spring an eloquent foretaste,  
Till we rebuke the sun-fed hours their haste,  
And stay the night that memory quickeneth  
With joy of summer and with hope that saith,  
The days of winter are for aye effaced ;

So in the barren days of life comes love  
And breathes its summer for a little day,  
Shed suddenly upon us from above,  
Mortal and mutable, doomed to decay,  
Then with life's suns and storms beset and slain,  
It leaves us naked to the winter rain.



## XXXVII

OH, how shall I persuade thee from me, dear ?  
Yet loving thee, how may I bid thee stay  
To share the sorrows of my anxious day,  
Perilous present, future without cheer ?  
Full many a storm-vexed, unpropitious year  
Has trailed its coil of weary months away  
And run my youth, whose colours fade and fray,  
Preparing for my spring old autumn's bier.

I will be eloquent against my cause,  
An honest and unwilling barrister,  
Yet, though I urge thee from me by mine art,  
Oh love, I pray thee, judge not quickly, pause,  
And ere thou leave me, hear and register  
The pleading of thine own, and of my heart.

OF SEPARATION, XXXVII-XLII



### XXXVIII

FROM the perplexity of vain affairs,  
Eager for thee I hasten my return,  
Knowing not busy Fate within the urn  
Has cast the fatal vote none braves, none dares ;  
I call thy name unanswered, unawares,  
And, unsuspecting, I repass in turn  
Each empty room, returning, I return  
Again to seek thee, e'er my heart despairs.

All things forsake me, all things bode me ill,  
A homeless ghost, astonished, in thy room  
I stand bewildered, questioning my doom,  
The very sun to me seems standing still.  
As if some blow had struck and caused my fall  
I know thee gone ; I know no more at all !





### XXXIX

HERE, where the sudden sundering of our ways  
Looms ominous with melancholy dark,  
In which no hope conceals the future spark  
To light the unwelcome stretch of weary days,  
With naught of bitterness, and tender praise.  
I would salute thee, friend, ere I embark,  
As one who dies seeks to erase each mark  
Of wrath, and breathes but peace in all he says.

We two like corpses in a single grave  
Bound close, with all eternity between,  
Or else like ghosts who formerly have been  
Sweet lovers, fain would speak, and yet we have  
No voice, no language, and our lifeless eyes  
For ever gaze their piteous surprise.



## XL

SILENCE and solitude and shy-eyed sleep  
Holding mine eyes awake companion me,<sup>1</sup>  
A melancholy and mysterious three,  
Companioning my watches while I weep.  
So the night wearies, and the dawn will creep  
Upon my desolation, till I see  
And loath the day, knowing I still must be  
A sentinel to sorrow, in her keep.

If death had taken thee it were no worse,  
The mere finality must torture less  
Than the perpetual, perplexing guess  
At life, when every day parades its hearse  
Till all we love is dead, buried and gone,  
Thinking to die, we marvel to live on.



## XLI

I HATE thee, oh my love, that thou hast made  
    Me suffer bitterly and uselessly,  
    Devoured my heritage of joy with me ;  
Left me to face life helpless and afraid.  
For as a simple child all unafraid,  
    With sweet familiar trust instinctively  
    Turns toward its mother, so I turned to thee  
Expecting all good things, needing thine aid.

The deepest wound will heal with trusty time  
    So finite are we, yet were I a god,  
    Through immortality the scar thy rod  
Has stamped upon my life would burn its crime.  
I know, alas ! though my heart break or mend,  
That hating, I must love thee till the end.



## XLII

THERE is a height, a depth to suffering  
Beyond which no man passes, then at last  
When every cherished hope is gone and past,  
Tired Nature shelters as beneath her wing.  
A numbness, such as death perhaps will bring,  
Upon our senses like a veil is cast,  
Life struggles slowly till it grips us fast,  
And forces us again into the ring.

E'en as a sufferer whom death disdained,  
Thrust back on life, with childish wonder sees  
The world, familiar, strange ; so, ill at ease,  
I stand beside thee, timid, tempted, pained,  
I wonder at the rose, I hesitate,  
And with closed eyes I rush to dare my Fate !





### XLIII

LET me forget, oh thou beloved night,  
Fold me about with thy oblivion,  
Cover the day and let the dark steal on,  
Shelter and hide me from the bitter light ;  
Yet once, alas ! with what a blithe delight  
I loved and wooed the glad relentless sun,  
Wounded with life, poet and simpleton,  
I now implore thy mercy and thy might.

I ask not happiness, nor sympathy,  
Nor hope, nor the eternal hush of death,  
But timidly I pray with every breath,  
Dream-dipped and star-bedewed, oh come to me,  
Pour me thy lethe, though I cry " Not yet,"  
Lest I should love her still, let me forget.

OF SOLITUDE, XLIII-XLVIII



## XLIV

WHAT of the night without thee, oh my sweet,  
Moonlight and starlight were alas to me  
As bitter darkness, fearful utterly,  
Hearing the failing echo of thy feet.  
And how without thee should I rise to greet  
The miracle of day ; how should I see  
The colours of the flowers, lacking thee ;  
What life were mine if our lips could not meet ?

What of the house without thee, and the room  
Where the glad sunlight poured its golden wine  
And laughed, to know me thine, to know thee  
mine,  
The sun would follow thee into the gloom ;  
Life, like a flower, rests within thy hand,  
And love without thee would forsake the land !



## XLV

ALONE once more, sweet nature, to thy breast,  
    Wounded and weary and athirst for thee,  
    Seeking thine ancient friendship timidly,  
I turn aside from love, and crave thy rest.  
And in thy solitude I find the best  
    Of eloquent and healing sympathy ;  
    Thy strength consoles, thy beauty strengthens me,  
The mind recomforted renews its quest.

The moment comes when every man at last  
    Feels his full isolation, and perceives  
    The hollowness of all that he believes,  
And breaks the mocking idols of the past,  
Fleeing his solitude and every one,  
With silent nature he is least alone.



## XLVI

NOT from without, but from within, this horde  
Of difficulties torturing the mind ;  
We moderns cannot love, we are too blind  
To welcome happiness without a word ;  
We must dissect each other, we must hoard  
Dissension and distrust, and we would bind  
The winged affections, tameless as the wind,  
Making love's harmony one vain discord.

Oh to love simply, to be natural !  
Taking the sun as gladly as the rose ;  
The wise, unthinking, joyous animal  
Along whose veins each force of nature flows,  
Filled to the finger-tips and lips with life,  
Insolent with our joy—eager for strife.





## XLVII

THAT I have made thee suffer hurts me most,  
I am become a hated enemy  
Unto myself since I have wounded thee ;  
Remorse, regret, have claimed me for their host—  
Once it had been my glory and my boast  
(In love so much is lover's vanity)  
To give thee happiness ; when suddenly  
This joy is vanished like an unreal ghost !

Silence were best, for speech is all in vain  
When in one look, one touch, all is not said,  
We shall not understand ; if love be dead,  
All living words are hollow to explain.  
Though with my tears, my blood I would atone,  
Shut each in self—each heart remains alone.



## XLVIII

ENOUGH of sorrow. I would teach thee, sweet,  
A new religion older than our own  
Which, like a well-worn garment, long outgrown,  
Is cast aside as faded and unmeet.  
A new Bacchante, I would have thee greet  
And hail the reign of joy unhymned, unknown ;  
Joy strong to purify and to atone,  
The wingèd liberator over fleet.

Shyly he comes, unwelcome, with the word  
Rejoice upon his lips, received with scorn,  
The new god of our future, newly born,  
The pulsing sap, the stirring blood has heard,  
Life flings its fetters, and with full, sweet throat  
Swells the glad cry, and strikes the joyous note.



## XLIX

SOME evil dream it was ; again we two,  
    In large contentment, with a glad surprise,  
    Read the bright page of love with steadfast eyes,  
And trim his torch that burns securely true.  
Now blown apart, helplessly drawn anew,  
    Though Eden close for us we shall devise,  
    With time and tenderness, a paradise,  
A deeper shelter than the young years knew.

Human and frail, capricious, love is proved  
    A conjurer, whose fee is liberty ;  
    Only the love we give returns to be  
The rapture, the reward of having loved ;  
Some fountain singing sunward in the soul  
Will freshen life, and make it sweet and whole.

RECONCILIATION, XLIX-LIV



## L

MY heart is burdened with its weight of woe,  
Its lost illusions, its realities,  
Weary of e'en the memory of these,  
Eager of silence, solitude, love go,  
There is no word however soft or low,  
No spoken kiss to touch, to give me ease ;  
I would forget all this for silent peace,  
Aimlessly watching life's incessant flow.

The sun within the tendrils of thy hair  
Plunges his golden fingers, lovingly—  
I watch, I feel thy comfort, wonderingly  
My head sinks on thy breast ; ah, dear love, where  
And whence this rest, this rapture ; in each breath  
I breathe the joy of life, the peace of death !





## LI

WHEN to the wonder of the childish eye  
Succeeds the reasoned survey of our life,  
Its petty aims, its ceaseless sordid strife,  
And the eternally unanswered why,  
Dumb and discouraged, without word or cry,  
Securely we advance, a sudden knife  
Is thrust within our hearts, it seems as if  
Life were transfigured like a sunset sky.

Nothing has changed, but love has made all new,  
And hidden in our heart a source of joy ;  
Man laughs as lightly as the untried boy,  
Freely again his course he will pursue.  
His lagging feet possess the speed of wings,  
His touch transforms all trite and common things.



LII

WE are but human, if we have a soul  
We know not, of our bodies we are sure,  
Therefore 'tis lovely that we hold as pure  
Their joys and their delights as sane and whole.  
Though priest and puritan with bell and scroll  
Condemn the transient flesh and scorn its lure,  
The flesh alone persists, and will endure  
When such religions pass beyond the goal.

Nor shall we fear to name sweet passion's name,  
Hiding our love in solitude and night,  
But, boldly walking in the sun's glad light,  
Burn up the dross of sin in its pure flame,  
Comrades, and friends, and lovers, joyous, free,  
Contented to enjoy mortality.



LIII

SILENCE and summer like a spell are spread  
About the night laid naked to the moon,  
The wind with folded wings sleeps in a swoon,  
The ripe grass ripples round thy flower-like head,  
The dew is in thy locks, where the sun fled  
And left the colours of the burning noon,  
White as the jasmin, that is shed too soon,  
Gleams that sweet body love has coveted.

Love's self it seems lies sleeping, e'en a god ;  
Tender and terrible, and half in fear,  
With furtive step in silence I draw near,  
As one who treads upon an holy sod ;  
Thy soft, sweet laughter mocks and wakens me,  
Thy human kiss betrays thy deity !



LIV

OH for the hand of Hercules to stay  
    The greedy throat of all-devouring time,  
    His craft, his cunning from the fowler's lime,  
To save this wingèd hour one little day.  
For love, who tortured us, would seem to play  
    The laughing god of rondelay and rhyme ;  
    Summer's enchantment charms the ungentle  
        clime,  
A large contentment holds unclouded sway.

Yet who shall say how long, and why at last  
    Nature and I and thou stand hand in hand,  
    We three as one who know, who understand,  
In simple happiness that has no past.  
Our suffering how easy to forget,  
For where our hands have touched, our souls have  
    met.





LV

THE soft wind sweetens with the lilac scent,  
    Shaking the fragrant boughs of memory,  
    Across the waking spring who comes to thee  
Insolent in his youth, untried, unbent,  
To him some hostile god of beauty lent  
    That thoughtless charm that women love to see,  
    The well-carved empty face of vanity,  
Easy conceit, contemptuous content.

What word, what welcome, where I looked to find  
    That tried indifference I long have known ;  
    What sudden pain, what anger sudden blown,  
Sweeps down the reasoned and resisting mind,  
Wakens the animal unthinking will  
To strike, to smite, to torture, and to kill.

OF JEALOUSY, LV-LX



LVI

I CANNOT smile beside thee, take his hand,  
    Knowing his trifling worth, his emptiness,  
    The light contempt that he could thus possess  
Thy precious favour, even as he planned.  
I cannot leave thee, rooted I must stand,  
    Self-tortured, self-perplexed, in keen distress  
    Suffer the shame of jealousy, confess  
This instinct common to the brutish band.

I cannot hate thee, since I love thee so;  
    I cannot love thee, hating thee as well ;  
    And from the horror of this growing hell,  
Since death were leaving thee, I cannot go.  
What issue, what escape, what dreaded move  
Shall rid me from the tyranny of love ?



## LVII

THE passion of the savage smoulders still  
    Beneath the cloak and armour of our age ;  
    We are but cowards, whom the blindest rage  
Leaves impotent and paralysed of will.  
The moment comes when each man longs to kill,  
    When only blood can quiet and assuage  
    The jealous instinct, like a pulseless sage  
We swallow shame and eat of wrath our fill.

Yet night and day, and day and night, one face  
    Darkens the sunlight, hunts the haunted night,  
    And like a demon dances in my sight,  
Lashing the dormant passion of my race.  
I warn thee come not near me, love ; beware,  
I am that evil force men call despair.



LVIII

SWEET boy, I find thee empty as a shell  
That echoes all the secrets of the sea,  
Such music has her favour leant to thee  
Whose grace, whose beauty I have learned too  
well.

The love, the hatred that I cannot quell  
Does thee much honour, too much wrong to  
me ;  
Clothed in her favour, I must look to see  
Thee grow in grace and loveliness as well.

She is not thine, oh foolish boy ; in vain  
Thy short-lived triumph, shall a man control  
This conjured vision of a poet's soul,  
Or steal the captive of his magic brain ?  
Coveteous brother of my deep desire,  
She knows not love, as water knows not fire.





## LIX

I SEE too clearly through my blinded eyes  
The wreckage of myself ; with helpless shame  
I have betrayed love's holy, tranquil name,  
Suffered the selfishness I did despise.  
How shall I dominate, how seek to rise  
Above this cry of self ; how shall I tame  
The eternal savage, who would thus defame  
The god of love, and slay him by surprise ?

Thy gift was trivial, a smile, a tear  
Fallen, and never to be found again,  
Yet they awoke a symphony of pain,  
And brimmed the goblet of a glowing year.  
I lent thee of my love, some love of me,  
In pity of thy loveless poverty.



## LX

No more, dear love, nay, never more again  
    Shall we together tread love's holy way,  
    We who have held the hungry hours at bay,  
And torn our pleasure from the teeth of pain.  
Softly, as of the dead, without disdain,  
    Let us take leave of love and steal away,  
    For we have mastered him and been his prey  
Sought him, and fought him all alike in vain !

But when the faded lilac blooms anew,  
    And the wood echoes to the nightingale,  
    When Love, the hunter, with enchanted crew,  
Of scent and sound pervades the hill and vale,  
Spring courses through the blood of man and tree,  
Oh, then beware the ghost of memory.



## LXI

As some sweet wind upon a desert land,  
    Falling from heaven with its quickening breath,  
    Awakens from the desperate sleep of death,  
A green oasis in a waste of sand,  
So love, that no man living may withstand,  
    Whose word no god nor mortal gainsayeth,  
    Falling upon Life's desert, quickeneth  
The wilderness made waste by Sorrow's hand.

While we abide beneath the tree of love  
    The hours, like golden stars across the night,  
    Slip one by one all silently from sight,  
And in the bending boughs murmuring above,  
The choristers of joy in praise of thee  
Have stolen thy voice to sing Love's rhapsody.

RETROSPECT, LXI-LXVI



## LXII

IN spite of all I say to ye, rejoice !

Have ye not change of summer, and sweet spring,  
The music of glad waters murmuring,  
The moon upon the wave, the bird's blithe voice,  
The lavish sun indifferent in his choice,  
The dancing leaves some god has taught to sing,  
Friendship of beast, and flower, and this thing  
More than all else, the heart to love ; rejoice !

How small an atom and how separate  
Is man alone, but when in harmony,  
Loving the life of bird and beast and tree,  
And loving love, and daring silent fate,  
All Nature's forces are as his, and bend  
To him who shall be god ere the world end.





### LXIII

WHO are these twain in undivided joy  
Coming across the glad, astonished spring,  
Clothed in their happiness, while wondering  
Nature betrays them neither girl nor boy ?  
With clasped hands that cling but never cloy,  
And eager eyes answering, questioning,  
Like honeyed bees musically murmuring,  
Their lips in silence smiling meet and toy.

They see not, saving in each other's eyes,  
While to an undivided melody  
Their bodies sway, advancing rhythmically,  
And fade, and lo ! the fleeting vision dies  
Of those who in some distant Grecian day  
Knew love delicious, delicate as they !



## LXIV

LOVE like a vulture hovers in the sky,  
While his unheeding victim roams the land  
And sees a shadow flying on the sand,  
But knows not that his enemy is nigh.  
Throned in the clouds he utters his hoarse cry,  
The poet hears but will not understand,  
And with uplifted voice, propitious hand,  
Prolongs his praise of love unceasingly.

Ugly and eager, brutal with desire,  
He eyes his prey, and with close-folded wing  
Plunges through space, and falls like a dead thing,  
And with his claws and beak of sudden fire  
Clutches his victim's heart, that beats no more,  
While the song mounts more sweetly than before.



LXV

To live beside thee some sweet length of days,  
And from mine anvil forge one living spark  
To lighten us across the uncertain dark  
And burn before our memory always ;  
To care not for men's censure, nor their praise,  
Their venomed envy, and their fangless bark,  
Indifferent as the simple soaring lark  
Whose skyward flight a rain of song betrays.

To eat of life as of some goodly fruit,  
To drink of love as of some gladdening wine,  
To seek within the human the divine,  
Undaunted by the evil at its root,  
To fall into the gathering hand of death,  
As some ripe fruit falls to the ready earth.



LXVI

COUNT not upon a woman, let her be  
The fragrance of the spring, the brief delight  
Of the elusive and alluring night,  
That haunts and beckons thee with memory.  
But in the hour of thy necessity  
Seek not her hand, when Fortune takes affright  
And life's foundations fail, for in thy plight  
No word will wake her to remember thee.

She is not human, she is one with all  
Fugitive sweetness, she is of the hour  
Intangible, eternal as a flower  
Whose fragrance lingers when its petals fall.  
Yet, though she love thee, trust her not, nor lend  
The holy, tranquil, steadfast name of friend.





# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

## OF LOVE, I-VI

	PAGE
As some old minstrel when the world was young . . . . .	I
To make my verse the crystal of thy face . . . . .	3
When in the world of men and sad affairs . . . . .	5
At the dull ending of some desperate day . . . . .	7
I would not bind thee with this love of mine . . . . .	9
Yet I would bind thee with this love of mine . . . . .	II

## OF ABSENCE, VII-XII

I have not seen thee, love, this weary day . . . . .	13
When thou art gone from me, as in a trance . . . . .	15
Under black clouds that lour against the spring . . . . .	17
In the wild tempests of the shaken mind . . . . .	19
Go from me, let the unpropitious hours . . . . .	21
If no night gave thee to mine arms again . . . . .	23

## OF PASSION, XIII-XVIII

Out of the treacherous and smiling sky . . . . .	25
Thy head is full of scent and colour, sweet . . . . .	27
All ye who come into this sacred place . . . . .	29
Slay me, sweet love, for it is better so . . . . .	31
You ask me if it always shall be so . . . . .	33
To feel the pulsing of the distant sea . . . . .	35

## OF DOUBT, XIX-XXIV

The sweet confusion of thy careless touch . . . . .	37
Oh love, behold me how I am thy slave . . . . .	39
To myself false, and to my love of thee . . . . .	41
Yet love me, love, for my great need of thee . . . . .	43
Thou shalt not fail me, thou who art my all . . . . .	45
Within the centre of the whirlpool, peace . . . . .	47

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

### OF PHILOSOPHY, XXV-XXX

	PAGE
When I survey each living monument . . . . .	49
Let others prate of progress, those who will . . . . .	51
For this men die, nay more, they live for this . . . . .	53
The foul-mouthed world with its corrupting breath . . . . .	55
What need have we of old or new-born creeds . . . . .	57
When I behold how everything that is . . . . .	59

### OF CONTENT, XXXI-XXXVI

The gracious ghosts of those old sonneteers . . . . .	61
How shall I praise thee, seeing thou art more . . . . .	63
Lend me thy beauty in the sullen night . . . . .	65
Petal by petal, the sweet hours are shed . . . . .	67
I count it half a joy that I have known . . . . .	69
As a fair golden day set in the waste . . . . .	71

### OF SEPARATION, XXXVII-XLII

Oh, how shall I persuade thee from me, dear . . . . .	73
From the perplexity of vain affairs . . . . .	75
Here, where the sudden sundering of our ways . . . . .	77
Silence and solitude and shy-eyed sleep . . . . .	79
I hate thee, oh my love, that thou hast made . . . . .	81
There is a height, a depth to suffering . . . . .	83

### OF SOLITUDE, XLIII-XLVIII

Let me forget, oh thou beloved night . . . . .	85
What of the night without thee, oh my sweet . . . . .	87
Alone once more, sweet nature, to thy breast . . . . .	89
Not from without, but from within, this horde . . . . .	91
That I have made thee suffer hurts me most . . . . .	93
Enough of sorrow. I would teach thee, sweet . . . . .	95

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

### RECONCILIATION, XLIX-LIV

	PAGE
Some evil dream it was; again we two . . . . .	97
My heart is burdened with its weight of woe . . . . .	99
When to the wonder of the childish eye . . . . .	101
We are but human, if we have a soul . . . . .	103
Silence and summer like a spell are spread . . . . .	105
Oh for the hand of Hercules to stay . . . . .	107

### OF JEALOUSY, LV-LX

The soft wind sweetens with the lilac scent . . . . .	109
I cannot smile beside thee, take his hand . . . . .	111
The passion of the savage smoulders still . . . . .	113
Sweet boy, I find thee empty as a shell . . . . .	115
I see too clearly through my blinded eyes . . . . .	117
No more, dear love, nay, never more again . . . . .	119

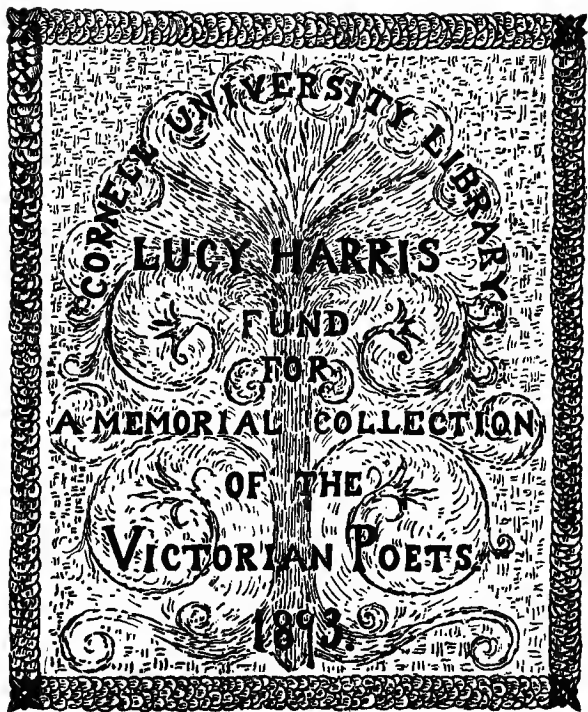
### RETROSPECT, LXI-LXVI

As some sweet wind upon a desert land . . . . .	121
In spite of all I say to ye, rejoice . . . . .	123
Who are these twain in undivided joy . . . . .	125
Love like a vulture hovers in the sky . . . . .	127
To live beside thee some sweet length of days . . . . .	129
Count not upon a woman, let her be . . . . .	131









A.250307

121111

